

U.S. Patent Application No. 10/721,215
Amendment After Final dated September 23, 2005
Reply to Office Action dated May 25, 2005

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Reconsideration and continued examination of the above-identified application are respectfully requested.

Claims 1-14 are pending in the present application. Claim 1 has been amended to recite a nitriding temperature range similar to claim 9, which has been indicated as containing allowable subject matter. Full support for this amendment can be found in the claims as originally filed, as well as at page 5, lines 14-28 of the present application. Furthermore, this amendment to claim 1 does not necessitate any further searching on the part of the Examiner, and does not raise any new issues of patentability, especially since a similar limitation was already considered by the Examiner in claim 9 and also has been indicated as being allowable. The amendment places the application in condition for allowance or at the very least, in a better condition for appeal. Accordingly, for these reasons, and since no question of new matter arises by this amendment, entry of this amendment is respectfully requested.

At page 2 of the Office Action, the Examiner rejects claims 1, 3, 5-8, and 10-14 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Reichert et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,193,779). The Examiner essentially relies on Reichert et al. in the same manner as in the previous Office Action. For the following reasons, this rejection is respectfully traversed.

As stated above, claim 1 now recites a nitriding temperature range that is similar to claim 9. The Examiner has indicated this subject matter to be allowable. For at least these reasons, this rejection should be withdrawn.

At page 3 of the Office Action, the Examiner rejects claim 4 over Reichert et al. Essentially, the Examiner is relying on the same reasoning as set forth in the earlier Office Action.

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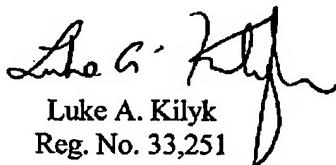
As indicated above, Reichert et al., as indicated by the Examiner, does not teach a nitriding temperature range as set forth in claim 9. Since claim 1 recites a very similar temperature range, and since claim 4 is dependent on claim 1, this rejection should be withdrawn as well.

CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing remarks, the applicants respectfully request the reconsideration of this application and the timely allowance of the pending claims.

If there are any other fees due in connection with the filing of this response, please charge the fees to Deposit Account No. 03-0060. If a fee is required for an extension of time under 37 C.F.R. § 1.136 not accounted for above, such extension is requested and should also be charged to said Deposit Account.

Respectfully submitted,



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